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MCI WorldCom's Wireless Internet to Help Bridge the Digital Divide

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Commits \$2 Million to Offer High-Speed Wireless Internet Service To Schools and Libraries in Four Rural Communities

WHITEVILLE, N.C., April 26 /PRNewswire/ -- In an effort to help bridge the "digital divide," MCI WorldCom today announced a \$2 million "wireless Internet" program to offer schools, libraries and community centers in four southern rural communities high-speed wireless Internet connectivity. At a meeting with community leaders in Whiteville, N.C., President Clinton and North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt applauded MCI WorldCom's leadership in using advanced technology to further education by bringing broadband services to students and communities left untouched by the Internet revolution.

Using a cutting-edge technology known as Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS), MCI WorldCom will offer high-speed wireless Internet connectivity to Raleigh, N.C., Houma, La., Dothan, Ala., and Hattiesburg, Miss. MCI WorldCom will deliver broadband services to several schools, libraries and/or community technology centers in each area beginning with the August 2000/2001 school year.

"Our growing wireless assets enable teachers and students in these communities to harness the enormous educational power of the Internet," said John Stupka, president of MCI WorldCom Wireless Solutions. "Every student across America, from urban to rural and everywhere in between, deserve access to everything the Internet has to offer, and MCI WorldCom is committed to delivering it - nationwide."

Today's initiative expands MCI WorldCom's commitment to support education using cutting-edge technology. The MCI WorldCom Foundation's Marco Polo program features a comprehensive teacher training kit and is available on-line at no cost through the program's website (www.wcom.com/marcopolo). In December 1999, MCI WorldCom announced an Internet training initiative for all teachers in seven Mississippi Delta states.

MCI WorldCom currently uses its existing MMDS wireless technology in states such as Mississippi and Florida to offer distance-learning and educational programming to schools and libraries in rural communities.

"One of the wonderful advantages of our wireless technology is its ability to reach across wide geographic areas and deliver high-speed Internet access," Stupka said. "We're excited to be a part of the drive to close the gap between Internet haves and have-nots and are committed to do all we can for educators and students."

In addition to the four rural markets announced today, MCI WorldCom is conducting MMDS service trials with schools, consumers and business customers in Jackson, Miss., Baton Rouge, La., and Memphis, Tenn. Technology trials in the Dallas / Ft. Worth area and Boston recently began.

With the merger of MCI WorldCom and Sprint, the combined company will offer its broadband "fixed wireless" service to customers in more than 100 markets by late 2001. It is the combination of MCI WorldCom and Sprint MMDS assets that will allow accelerated deployment of wireless broadband services to rural areas and markets traditionally underserved by the cable and local phone companies.

MCI WorldCom (Nasdaq: [WCOM](http://www.wcom.com)) is a global leader in "all-distance" communications services with operations in more than 65 countries. Revenues in 1999 were \$37 billion, with more than \$15 billion from high-growth data, Internet and international services. MCI WorldCom and Sprint have announced a merger agreement, which the companies expect to close in the second half of 2000 after regulatory and shareholder approvals. For more information go to <http://www.wcom.com>. SOURCE MCI WorldCom

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Pennsylvania Gov. Ridge Announces Global Technology Leader to Expand World Headquarters in Southwestern PA, Add About 1,000 New Jobs

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Marconi to Take Advantage of Increasing Worldwide Demand for Communications Solutions

Deal Finalized During Gov. Ridge's London Meeting With Marconi Executives

During 1999 European Trade Mission

WARRENDALE, Pa., April 26 /PRNewswire/ -- Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge today announced that global technology solutions provider Marconi Communications will expand its world headquarters near Pittsburgh, creating about 1,000 new jobs -- another powerful signal of Southwestern Pennsylvania's growth as a high-tech leader.

Gov. Ridge made the announcement immediately after joining Marconi plc CEO Lord George Simpson and Marconi Communications CEO Mike Parton on a tour of the Marconi complex to see first hand the high-tech networking devices that have made the Marconi name respected around the world.

"Gov. Ridge is a growth-oriented leader who has invested his time and dedication in helping Marconi expand in Pennsylvania," Lord Simpson said. "He's been a marvelous partner from the first time we met in London during his trade and investment trip to the U.K."

During his European trade mission to Germany and the United Kingdom last fall, Gov. Ridge met with Lord Simpson and closed the deal on Marconi's expansion in Pennsylvania. Less than two months after the mission, Marconi Communications announced it would locate its world headquarters in Warrendale at the former home of FORE Systems.

"We work hard every day not only to bring new jobs into Pennsylvania, but to keep the jobs we already have and to help those employers grow," said Gov. Ridge. "That's why we took the time to travel to London to meet personally with Lord Simpson. First, to thank him for acquiring FORE Systems and keeping the firm in Southwestern Pennsylvania. And second, to see how we could help them expand their technology presence here.

"I am pleased to know that we have what it takes to keep a global powerhouse like Marconi operating and expanding in our state. Not only are we keeping 1,300 existing jobs -- we're adding about 1,000 new ones. That's what I call a win!"

Marconi Communications, headquartered in Warrendale, is a global provider of high-performance communications solutions that help companies and service providers plan, build and operate their voice, video and data networks. A rapidly growing, global communications company, Marconi Communications' customers include Boeing, Ford Motor Company, Microsoft, Delta Airlines and Shell Oil, in addition to service providers such as Sprint, UUNET, Cable & Wireless and BellSouth.

Currently housed in four buildings on 461,000 square feet in Warrendale, the planned expansion will include the addition of two new buildings that will increase square footage to more than 670,000. The expansion will help expand Marconi Communications engineering, research and development, and customer- support functions, while accommodating the expected boost in new hires at the facility.

"We are proud to showcase Marconi Communications for Gov. Ridge because his dedication to technological growth in Pennsylvania helped make our plan for expansion a reality," said Marconi Communications CEO Mike Parton. "We've definitely become partners in progress, making this quite an exciting time for Marconi and for Pennsylvania."

Gov. Ridge agreed to provide Marconi with a \$5.6 million economic package that includes an Opportunity Grant, Job Creation Tax Credits, Customized Job Training and a Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority loan.

The announcement of planned new jobs at Marconi Communications is another in the line of ongoing success stories resulting from the economic and technology trade missions led by Gov. Ridge and his Administration. Pennsylvania companies that have accompanied the Administration on 11 missions since 1996 have realized nearly \$71 million in actual export sales.

Gov. Ridge personally has led trade missions to Japan; Singapore; Korea; Vietnam; Israel; Ireland; Mexico; Canada; Germany; and the United Kingdom. The Administration also has led missions to India, Poland, South Africa and Brazil.

The 1999 European trade mission alone already is projecting sales of nearly \$50 million. In addition, Gov. Ridge met with German and British-owned firms -- like Marconi -- that together employ more than 27,000 Pennsylvania workers.

"Today's announcement is a wonderful example of why thinking and acting globally just makes good sense," said Gov. Ridge. "By taking the time to visit Marconi at its London offices, we developed relationships that have helped to create good family sustaining jobs back home."

Marconi Communications, a global communications company with world headquarters in Western Pennsylvania, is a division of Marconi plc. Marconi plc (LONDON: MNI) is a global supplier of the key technologies and services for the New Public Network and the Internet.

With 45,000 employees worldwide and sales in more than 100 countries, it is headquartered in London, listed on the London Stock Exchange and appears in the FTSE-100 index.

Under the Ridge Administration, Pennsylvania families and employers have saved nearly \$8.7 billion through tax cuts, workers' compensation reform, electric competition and reduced red tape. These savings have helped to create nearly 300,000 new jobs.

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SOURCE Marconi Communications

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